

STUDENT HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming (GSP). In addition to offering non-transcript-bearing professional development programming, this division houses the following transcript-bearing programs for which this handbook applies:

CLVR-PBC = Low Vision Rehabilitation Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

LVR-MS = Low Vision Rehabilitation Master of Science (MS) Degree

COM-PBC = Orientation and Mobility Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

OM-MS = Orientation and Mobility Master of Science (MS) Degree

BVI-PBC= Teachers of Students with Vision Impairment (TVI) Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

BVI-MED = Blindness and Vision Impairment Master of Education (MEd) Degree

CVRT-PBC = Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

VRT-MS = Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Master of Science (MS) Degree

CLO-MSCO = Master of Science (MSc) in Clinical Optometry with an Advanced Studies Certificate Degree Program

The MSc in Clinical Optometry with an Advanced Studies Certificate degree program is a non-entry-to-practice graduate degree offered to international ophthalmic practitioners to advance their clinical knowledge and skills. All other transcript-bearing programs listed above are part of an integrated suite of highly specialized programs that prepare professionals to support people with blindness or low vision through education and rehabilitation services to promote accessibility, independence, and inclusion.

The Graduate and Specialized Programming faculty and administration are committed to delivering a curriculum that is rigorous, relevant, and learner-friendly and to supporting students in all aspects of their academic journey. We look forward to working with you, the student, to provide a rich and rewarding graduate education experience that leads to lifetime collegueship and collaboration.

This handbook is intended for graduate students enrolled in programs within the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming (GSP). It serves as a resource for understanding division and program-specific academic requirements, policies, procedures, expectations, and available student resources. Faculty, staff, advisors, and administrators may also use the handbook as a reference when supporting GSP students throughout their academic journey.

The Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming Handbook is supplementary to the [Drexel University Graduate Student Handbook](#), the [Drexel University Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [academic policies of the Office of the Provost](#).

The information contained within this handbook reflects current division/departmental policies and applies to currently enrolled students. Drexel University reserves the right to change any policies, rules, regulations, or standards at any time, as necessary in the interest of the University. If the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming policy on an issue is more stringent than the University's, the student will be held to the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming Student Handbook. Drexel University and the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming also reserve the right to modify or discontinue any of the services, programs, or activities described in this handbook. The Graduate and Specialized Programming Handbook is updated continually. Students are advised to refer to the most current handbook when accessing relevant information.

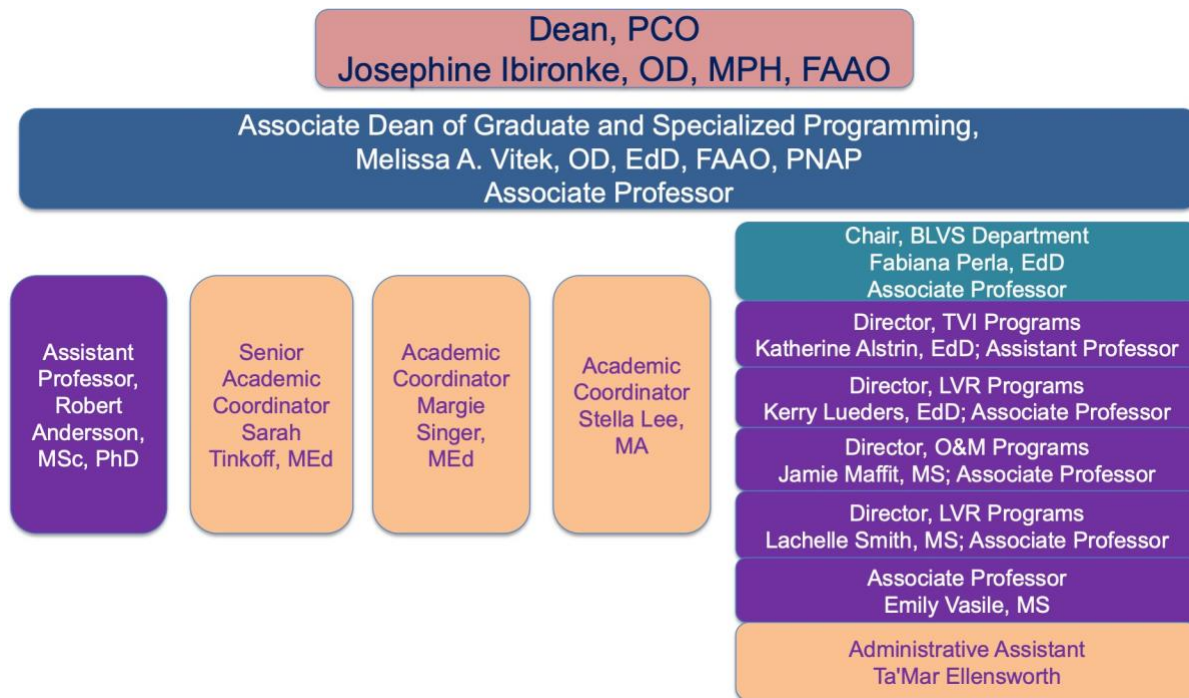
EMERGENCY NUMBERS AND WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS/DELAYS

Drexel University Emergency Phone Numbers can be found on the [Office of Public Safety](#) webpage. In the event of an emergency closing or inclement weather, students may attain closing information from the Drexel University website, the Office of Public Safety website, and the DrexelALERT system. Students should also check their Drexel University e-mail account for closing information. All students scheduled for clinical practicum or an online, synchronous course should contact their course faculty member/track director/program director for additional reporting requirements during an emergency closing.

In the event of an immediate or life-threatening emergency, call **911**.

For emergencies or safety concerns on Drexel University campuses, students should also follow the emergency procedures established by Drexel University's Department of Public Safety. Students participating in clinical, internship, residency, or fieldwork experiences at an off-campus location should follow the placement site's emergency procedures and notify the appropriate program representative as soon as it is safe to do so.

DIVISION OF GRADUATE AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DIVISION OF GRADUATE AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING DIRECTORY

This can also be found on the Drexel Elkins Park website: [GSP Administration and Faculty.](#)

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ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

The faculty uses a variety of teaching and learning methods in each course to facilitate the achievement of course objectives and programmatic outcomes.

Drexel University is institutionally accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). In addition to the University's institutional accreditation.

The Master of Science in Clinical Optometry with an Advanced Studies certificate program is not an entry-to-practice degree and therefore not accredited under the Accreditation Council

on Optometric Education (ACOE). Issuance of this degree is subject to Drexel University's regional accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

The Master of Science degree and Graduate Certificate program in Orientation and Mobility (O&M), the Master of Science degree and Graduate Certificate in Low Vision Rehabilitation (LVR), and the Master of Science degree and Graduate Certificate in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) programs are all accredited by the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) and the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERAC).

The Master of Education degree and certificate in Blindness and Vision Impairment for Teachers of Students with Vision Impairments (TVI) are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES

For academic advising, advisor/student responsibilities, tutoring, accessibility/disability resources, counseling, and other support, please contact your program director. Additional information is available on the [Student Success Department](#) webpage.

Academic success involves more than meeting curricular requirements. While academic skills can be strengthened through advising, tutoring, and other educational resources, students also benefit from opportunities to build relationships, connect with peers, participate in student organizations, and access appropriate social and emotional support. These resources can contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and help students remain engaged throughout their graduate education. Please see [Drexel's Graduate Student Organizations webpage](#) for more information.

REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking accommodations based on a documented disability are encouraged to contact the **Office of Disability Resources (ODR)** at disability@drexel.edu to begin the registration process. This is a confidential, student-driven process that requires completing a **Student Request Form (SRF)** and providing supporting documentation. Once documentation is submitted, students will meet with an **Accommodation Coordinator** to discuss their needs and participate in the **Interactive Process** to determine appropriate accommodations. More information is available on the Office of Disability Resources website.

Students already registered with ODR who believe they need additional accommodations can contact disability@drexel.edu to begin a new request.

Departments are encouraged to work collaboratively with ODR and the student to provide an **accessible and equitable learning environment**. Students are responsible for keeping their **Accommodations Verification Letter (AVL)** current and must renew it at the beginning of each term.

CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Students graduating from Drexel University demonstrate competency in a field of study evidenced by achievement of a set of program-specific learning outcomes. In addition, they also demonstrate meaningful progress in six core intellectual and practical skill areas and five experiential and applied learning areas. Learning in these core areas supports, and is integrated with, learning in their disciplines. Students exhibit levels of competency in each of these areas appropriate to their program of study, their individual interests, and their abilities. The Drexel Student Learning Priorities provide the framework for a broad education across disciplines and lay the foundation for a successful future [The Drexel Student Learning Priorities](#) (DSLPP) are available on the Office of the Provost Website.

Curriculum and Course descriptions for each course included in a student's plan of study can be accessed via the [Drexel University Course Catalog](#). Students are encouraged to review the descriptions of courses they are or will be enrolled in. Students should follow the curriculum and plan of study applicable to their program and, where appropriate, consult their Program Director before changing their course sequence for a non-lock step program. For a lock-step program, students do not register for or drop courses themselves as this is done for them by the registrar.

ENROLLMENT STATUS, BILLING AND FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

Information on enrollment status and billing for graduate students is available on the [Drexel Central Website](#).

Students are responsible for understanding the effect of their enrollment status on [financial aid eligibility](#).

HEALTH INSURANCE AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Enrolled students must maintain health insurance coverage and comply with Drexel University's general immunization requirements. Students may satisfy the health insurance requirement by enrolling in the Drexel University-sponsored health insurance plan or, when eligible, by submitting a waiver demonstrating alternative coverage that meets the university's waiver requirements. Students participating in clinical education or other experiential learning activities may be subject to additional health insurance, immunization, and clinical compliance requirements established by their program or clinical site. All applicable requirements must be met prior to participation.

Information regarding health insurance enrollment, waivers, coverage, immunization requirements, and applicable deadlines is available on the [Drexel University Health Insurance and Immunization website](#).

GENERAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for understanding all requirements stated in this Handbook. Students are required to use their Drexel University email account when communicating with faculty, staff, and administrators at Drexel University. Students are expected to check their Drexel University email account twice daily as some correspondence from faculty may be time-dependent. In addition, all students are expected to check their Drexel University email accounts on weekends, breaks, holidays, and other unassigned times for the duration of their enrollment.

GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Refer to the [Drexel University Graduate Graduation Requirements webpage](#) for all graduation requirements and deadlines. Students should contact their program director with any questions.

TIME FOR COMPLETION

Students enrolled in a master's program are expected to complete their degree within 5 years. This does include any time taken off for a leave of absence (LOA). Students may seek an extension to their time to completion by filing an appeal with the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who exceed the 5-year time limit without filing an appeal will be required to reapply to the University/program and may be subject to special conditions as curricula may have changed.

READMISSION

Readmission is the process by which previously enrolled Drexel students with inactive status who did not earn a degree re-enroll at the University. If a student's record has been deactivated due to withdrawal from the University, academic dismissal, or registration inactivity for three consecutive semesters, they must reapply before being considered for readmission to their program to continue their education at Drexel.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Please see the [Provost's Policy on Religious Observances](#) for more information.

As stated in the [Religious Observances policy](#), housed on the Office of the Provost website, "Drexel University supports an environment that respects the religious observances of others and is committed to making every reasonable effort to accommodate the religious observances of faculty, students, and professional staff."

Faculty members are asked to reasonably accommodate a student's religious observances. Students are asked to inform their faculty members, well in advance, of any absences or schedule conflicts due to religious observances, and the University encourages requesting accommodations as early as possible. The student and faculty should develop a mutually agreed-upon, reasonable accommodation.

In the event no such accommodation can be agreed upon, the student may appeal to the following areas in collaboration with the Director for Optometric Student Success:

- First, to the Program Director;
- Then, if needed, to the Associate Dean of Graduate and Specialized Programming;
- Finally, if there is no resolution at that level, to the Dean of the college or school.

Religious accommodations are not limited to coursework. Housing and dining accommodations may be requested through the **Housing/Dining Accommodation Form** in DrexelOne, and students holding assistantship appointments may coordinate work-related accommodations with their Supervising Professor, paralleling the University's employee process. The Office of Spiritual and Religious Life offers resources and chaplain support at any stage of the process.

Students who believe they have experienced discrimination or harassment on the basis of religion (including a denial of a requested accommodation) may report this to the **Office of Civil Rights Compliance (CRC)**. Students can file an Incident Report with CRC [using this link](#) or by emailing civilrights@drexel.edu.

DREXEL'S OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Drexel University is an equal opportunity institution dedicated to compliance with all applicable civil rights and equal opportunity laws and policies. Drexel's Office of Civil Rights Compliance (CRC) is dedicated to promoting student access to education. The student should be familiar with their rights and responsibilities under Drexel's civil rights policies:

-  [CR-1: Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#)
-  [CR-2: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

Accordingly, Drexel prohibits all discrimination, harassment, other misconduct, and retaliation based on protected characteristics.

These policies prohibit anyone from engaging in and protect anyone from suffering from:

- Sexual discrimination, hostile environment sexual harassment, quid pro quo sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault;
- Sexual exploitation, non-physical intimate partner violence, university sexual harassment, and offenses against minors;
- Any form of discrimination, harassment, and any other forms of misconduct on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic

characteristics), ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification protected by law (referred to as “protected category(ies)”) in the programs or activities Drexel operates; and

- Retaliation for participating in or engaging with Drexel’s civil rights office in any way.

Students are required to complete assigned civil rights trainings to meet their enrollment requirements. Drexel University will assign these via appropriate systems.

Questions may be directed to the [Drexel Office of Civil Rights Compliance](#) (CRC) and its Title IX & Civil Rights Coordinator at civilrights@drexel.edu.

If the student believes they or someone else has experienced prohibited conduct, the student should file an [Incident Report using this link](#) or email civilrights@drexel.edu as soon as possible.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT (ONLINE AND IN-PERSON)

Students in the Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming are engaged in professional practice and, as such, all communication with faculty members and other students should always be respectful. Breach of the expected behaviors described below could lead to sanctions against a student.

The following are expected behaviors that support the teaching/learning environment:

- Always address the faculty member by their title unless otherwise indicated: Professor or Doctor.
- Arrive on time for synchronous class sessions and remain an active participant for the entire class period.
- Contact the faculty member in the event of tardiness or absence prior to a scheduled synchronous class session.
- Students are expected to interact with all members of the Drexel community in a respectful, professional, and civil manner, communicating and behaving in ways that are free from threats, intimidation, or other conduct that undermines the learning or working environment. The [University Code of Conduct](#) is a comprehensive document that outlines policies and procedures for expectations of academic and non-academic student behavior.

Students are expected to demonstrate the same standards of professionalism, respect, and civility in online learning environments as they would in face-to-face interactions. Courtesy, politeness, and professional communication should be maintained in all forms of online engagement, including virtual classes, discussion boards, email, messaging platforms, and other electronic communications. Students are expected to communicate thoughtfully and respectfully, recognizing that written and audio communications have the same impact and should be afforded the same level of professionalism as in-person interactions. Individuals are

responsible for their online conduct and should consider how their words and actions may affect others. All online interactions should contribute to a respectful, inclusive, and productive learning environment. Students are expected to turn on their camera when participating in virtual lectures to simulate a face-to-face environment, unless otherwise approved.

The use of cell phones or other electronic devices during lectures and lab sessions for texting, talking, or any other non-classroom-related purpose is disruptive to other students and is therefore prohibited. Please be courteous to your instructor and classmates and turn off all electronic devices and store them properly. The use of laptop computers during lectures and lab sessions must be limited to course activity only. Accessing any social media sites or personal e-mail accounts during lectures and lab sessions violates classroom policy.

REGISTRATION HOLDS

Different departments across the University may place a “hold” on a student’s account, preventing them from registering (for non-lockstep programs) or being registered (for lockstep programs) for the next term’s classes. The student must work with the corresponding office to remove the hold from their account. Please see [Drexel University’s Registration Holds and Restriction webpage](#) for more information.

COURSE ADD/DROP PROCEDURE FOR NON-LOCKSTEP PROGRAMS

The Division of Graduate and Specialized Programming adheres to the course add/drop timeline as outlined in Drexel University policies. Students must adhere to the following process when adding or dropping a course from their schedule:

- Students must review and be familiar with the [course add/drop policies and deadlines](#) set forth by Drexel University.
- Students must notify their assigned academic advisor, via e-mail, of the desire to add or drop a course from their schedule before the course drop/add deadline. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the Drexel at Elkins Park Academic Calendar posted on the [Provost website](#).
- In the event a student would like to add a course to their schedule, the intended course must not conflict with their plan of study. Course additions are subject to availability and must be approved by their program director.

Adjusting a schedule by either adding or dropping courses may have financial aid and billing implications. Students should become familiar with understanding financial aid terms and conditions and the [Refund Policies and Procedures](#) before making schedule adjustments.

Students are encouraged to contact the [Financial Aid Office](#) to determine potential consequences prior to requesting a course add/drop. Students on a visa should check with Drexel [International Students and Scholars Services](#) to understand how course enrollment affects visa status.

TRANSFER CREDITS

All transfer credit decisions are at the discretion of the academic unit and approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate and Specialized Programming or their designee. Students must consult with their respective department to determine which credits may, or may not be transferable before they matriculate.

Per Drexel's Guidelines for Transfer of Credit, graduate students may transfer up to 10 semester credits based on the requirements of their respective programs. In all cases, the student must take a minimum of 20 semester credits at Drexel University.

Transfer credits from international educational institutions may require additional vetting per our regional accrediting agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

ATTENDANCE

In general, GSP policy expects student attendance at all lectures. Though attendance is not always mandatory, students are responsible for learning all course material. A course instructor may require mandatory attendance at lectures/academic activities at their discretion. The course instructor will describe the attendance requirement(s) in the course syllabus. Unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus:

1. **For an absence from a single educational activity/exam**, students should submit an email to the course instructor, who will determine whether the student's request is approved and what documentation is required. If the course instructor needs assistance determining whether a student should receive an excused absence, they will consult their program director. If the course instructor is the program director, they will consult with the BLVS program chair or the Associate Dean of Graduate and Specialized Programming. The student will be notified in writing via email whether their absence was excused or unexcused. Consequences for unexcused absences are addressed in the course syllabus/Fieldwork/Internship Handbook.
2. **For an absence from a series of educational activities/exams for a time frame of 2-4 weeks**, students should submit an email request to the Associate Dean of Graduate and Specialized Programming (GSP). The Associate Dean of GSP will determine if the excused absence is granted. The Associate Dean of GSP will notify the student and the program director via email whether their request has been approved. The program director will notify the relevant faculty members of the student's short-term absence and ensure that a plan is in place for the student to make up any missed work.
3. **For an absence from a series of educational activities/exams lasting more than 4 weeks**, students should submit an email request for a leave of absence to the Associate Dean of GSP. The Associate Dean of GSP will notify the student via email if their request has been granted and will also communicate with the relevant program director. The program director is responsible for notifying relevant faculty members of

the student's absence. If a student is approved for reinstatement following a leave of absence, the Associate Dean of GSP will contact the program director. The program director is responsible for notifying relevant faculty members of the student's return and ensuring that a plan is in place to help the student resume their studies effectively.

For more information, please see [Drexel University's Office of Graduate Studies leave of absence policy](#).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student may need to interrupt their studies for a variety of reasons (academic, medical, financial, or personal). Students choosing to take a [leave of absence](#) must first contact their program director to initiate the process stated above. International students on F-1 or J-1 visas must consult [International Students and Scholars Services](#) (ISSS) before requesting a leave.

WITHDRAW FROM A PROGRAM AND/OR THE UNIVERSITY

A student may leave the University with no intention of returning by withdrawing from the University. If a student wishes to formally separate from their academic program and/or Drexel University, they should consult with their program director and may ultimately submit a [University Withdrawal request](#) via the Advisor Visit Tracking (AVT) system.

LATENESS TO EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

Students are expected to arrive on time, as defined by the schedule, and to stay in the assigned activity until released by their instructor/supervisor. Consistent late arrival after the start of an activity/assignment and/or unapproved early departure may be documented and reported to the Department Chair and/or the Associate Dean of GSP.

COURSE CONCERNS / ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Course issues should initially be discussed between the instructor(s) and the student. If the concerns are not resolved satisfactorily, they should be brought to the Associate Dean of GSP. If the concerns remain unresolved, they should be brought to the Dean of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO). Decisions made by the Dean of PCO are final, and no further appeals are granted.

EXAMINATION PROTOCOLS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Drexel University expects all members of its community to uphold the highest values of academic integrity. In upholding these values, the University is committed to investigating any allegation of violations of academic integrity against a student. Drexel University's Academic Integrity Policy prohibits the following examples of academic misconduct: plagiarism,

cheating, fabrication, and other acts of academic misconduct as outlined in the Code of Conduct. [The University's full Academic Integrity Policy](#) is available on the Provost's website. For expectations governing the use of artificial intelligence in academic work, see [Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#).

Any student found responsible for violating the Academic Integrity Policy faces consequences consistent with the severity of the violation. Sanctions may range from course-level sanctions to suspension or expulsion from the University. A violation of the Academic Integrity Policy discovered after the conferral of a degree may result in subsequent Withdrawal of Degree.

Students accused of academic integrity violations are entitled to the process outlined by the [Student](#) Code of Conduct which includes an opportunity to appeal.

The student is responsible for understanding the examination-taking policies for their program. They are outlined in the individual course syllabus. Questions or concerns should first be directed to the course instructor and then, if not resolved, to the Director of their program.

Infractions of the examination policies are considered serious offenses. These matters will be referred to the University Judicial Committee for review and further action. Any student found guilty of an infraction will be penalized appropriately, including the possibility of expulsion from Drexel University.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADES

Grading Scale for the MSc in Clinical Optometry Degree Program

Grade	Grade Points
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
F	0.0
W	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
AUD	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
CR	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
NCR	0.0 (does not affect GPA)

GNS	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
INP	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
INC	0.0 (does not affect GPA)

Grading Scale for the Blindness and Low Vision Studies Programs

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0
W	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
AUD	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
CR	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
NCR	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
GNS	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
INP	0.0 (does not affect GPA)
INC	0.0 (does not affect GPA)

Some courses are graded CR = Satisfactory or NCR = Unsatisfactory (where no credits are earned); CR and NCR grades do not have a corresponding numerical quality point weight and are not included in quality point average calculations. CR/NCR grades are typically used for research-type courses (theses, dissertations, practicums, co-ops). A grade of CR (Credit) indicates that the course was passed. A grade of NCR (No Credit) indicates that the work was unsatisfactory and that the credits will not count toward degree requirements.

Some of the GSP degree programs require a minimum grade of "B" for Internship/fieldwork courses. Please see individual course syllabi for more information.

At the discretion of an instructor, the grade of "INC" or Incomplete may be reported in place of a grade for any course in which the instructor deems that the work has not been completed and that the student can complete the work within an agreed-upon amount of time, in accordance with University policy and the statute of limitations governing grade changes. A grade of "INC" may be entered for a student at the time grades are submitted for the course. The conditions and terms for the completion of the course are at the discretion of the instructor and are to be mutually agreed upon by the instructor and the student and noted in [Incomplete Grade Contract](#) to be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies. If the grade is not submitted within one semester or the designated due date to complete the coursework, the "INC" will be converted to an "F" on the student's record and reflected in the student's GPA. The grade of "F" will be considered a permanent grade unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Students who are on probation or planning to graduate cannot be offered an "INC" grade.

Instead, the grade of “GNS” or Grade Not Submitted should be awarded temporarily to be converted into a regular grade by the end of the first week of the following semester and not at the end of that semester, as is the case for all other students.

If an instructor does not report a grade for a student, an automatic notation of GNS is recorded. This is not a grade, but a temporary indicator that requires prompt resolution leading either to the removal of the course from the student's record or to the assignment of a grade. If a final grade is not reported by the end of the next calendar term, an administrative grade of "F" will be recorded on the student's transcript. It will be calculated as a failure on the student's GPA and will then be considered a permanent grade. Students are urged to check their records each term and follow up when required.

The Audit Option provides students the opportunity to attend a course that carries no credit and no standard letter grade. Participation in the course will be evidenced by the "AUD" grade designation on the transcript. The "AUD" grade designation does not affect a student's GPA. The Audit designation must be added by the end of the drop/add period and be approved by the program director and individual course instructor. Tuition fees may apply.

Please see [Drexel University's Grade Policy for Graduate Students](#) for more information:

COURSE REMEDIATION

Students must remediate a failed course through a remediation exam. Upon successfully passing a remediation exam, the instructor will submit a grade change for the failed course. This process must be completed by the add/drop deadline of the semester following the failure. For the MSc in Clinical Optometry with an Advanced Studies Certificate degree program, students will have up to two attempts to remediate the course, and for all other GSP programs, they will have one attempt. The Program Director will communicate the remediation plan to the student. The highest possible grade for a student who remediates a course is a “B” grade. A student who fails a course remediation beyond the number of attempts allowed for their designated program will be dismissed from the program.

GRADUATE ACADEMIC STANDING

All permanent grades with quality point weights count in the computation of the student's cumulative grade point average. Students may not receive more than two C grades in graduate courses toward degree completion. Any additional C grades beyond the allowable 2 will not count toward degree progression; however, they will count in the term and cumulative GPA calculations. Students must remediate courses in which they earn a C after earning two C grades in prior courses. Note that all graduate students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher to remain in good academic standing and progress toward graduation.

Academic Standing is determined each term a student is registered for classes and is based on both the term GPA and the cumulative GPA. The cumulative GPA is calculated using all prior terms of graduate enrollment at Drexel. A student's academic standing is

reflected on their permanent academic transcript. All graduate students are expected to maintain a term and cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher to progress toward graduation. The academic standing process for graduate students subject to this policy shall be in accordance with the following actions and requirements:

- **Good Standing:** A graduate student is in good academic standing when they maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 for the term and cumulatively.
- **Academic Probation:** A graduate student is placed on academic probation when their cumulative GPA falls below a 3.00 except in their first term in a graduate program. See “Good Standing with Program Director Check” above.
 - **Action:** A graduate student will be formally notified of their Academic Probation status by a letter from the Associate Dean of GSP. They must meet with their program director by the end of the first week of classes in the subsequent term to develop an academic remediation plan.
 - **Continued on Probation:** A graduate student may have “Continue on Probation” status for two consecutive terms unless their term and/or cumulative GPA falls below 2.00, in which case the student will be automatically dismissed. In the second term of probation, the student will be classified as “Continued on Probation”. A graduate student can only be on “Continued on Probation” status once during their tenure at the University.
 - **Actions:** A graduate student will be formally notified of their “Continued on Probation” status by a letter issued from the Associate Dean of GSP. They should continue to meet with their program director to discuss the academic remediation plan.
- **Academic Dismissal:** If a graduate student fails to meet the requirements of their advisor check or probationary status, the student will be academically dismissed from the University. In addition, a graduate student outside of a “probationary” status who has a term and/or cumulative GPA below 2.00 will be automatically dismissed. Further, a graduate student who was previously on a “required program director check” or “probationary” status and successfully returned to good academic standing will be academically dismissed from the University if they fail to maintain good academic standing thereafter during their tenure at the University.
 - **Actions:** A graduate student will be formally notified of their Academic Dismissal from the University by a letter issued by the Associate Dean of GSP.
 - **Option - Appeal for Reinstatement:** A graduate student may appeal their initial academic dismissal by submitting a written letter of appeal to the Associate Dean of GSP with a detailed explanation of the circumstances that may have impacted their academic standing. The Associate Dean of GSP will convene a faculty-led Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP) to review the appeal.

See the section of this handbook on CAP below for more details on the composition and function of the committee. This process is not to be used for additional fact-finding. New information, which was available but not presented to the Committee on Academic Promotions will not be considered. The Dean of PCO's decision is final, and there are no further avenues of appeal. If the student does not appeal their Academic Dismissal within 3 business days of receiving the CAP decision, the Academic Dismissal will remain in effect, and the student will be required to apply for readmission to the University in future terms; however, readmission is not guaranteed.

Dismissed and Reinstated: If a graduate student's appeal for reinstatement is approved, the student will be classified as dismissed and reinstated.

- **Actions:** Upon reinstatement, the graduate student must achieve good academic standing in the first term immediately following reinstatement, as determined by the approved academic remediation plan.

Final Academic Dismissal: If a graduate student fails to meet the requirements of their reinstatement, they will be permanently dismissed from the University with no further avenues of appeal.

- **Action:** A graduate student will be formally notified of their final academic Dismissal from the University by a letter issued by the Dean of PCO.

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS (CAP)

The Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP) addresses appeals for reinstatement following dismissal and is selected by the Associate Dean of Graduate and Specialized Programming. The Committee consists of three voting faculty members, including at least one who teaches in the relevant student's program. One faculty member will be designated as the CAP Chair.

The CAP hears appeals for reinstatement from any student dismissed under the criteria outlined in the section of this handbook on graduate academic standing. CAP will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal. The Committee may review grades and summaries concerning professional development and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control. The Committee shall then decide either to:

- Uphold the dismissal, or
- Reinstatement the student, either immediately or at a future date if warranted.

If the Committee's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the Committee on Academic Promotions may include, but are not limited to, requiring the student to:

- Take a remediation examination(s)
- Enroll in a specified course of study
- Continue matriculation on a modified program

- Repeat specific courses or rotations even if previously passed
- Repeat an academic year of study
- Obtain academic counseling and/or tutoring
- Recommend an academic or health evaluation

A student who is required to re-enroll and repeat a course is responsible for the academic or clinical work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the course re-enrollment. The student is responsible for tuition and related educational costs associated with required course re-enrollment.

A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons is not eligible for remediation or re-enrollment in any course, nor may they participate in any patient care-related or fieldwork activities. A student appealing their dismissal may continue to participate in all academic activities, unless otherwise prohibited, until the formal appeals process is exhausted. Remediation exams or re-enrollment may occur only after the student is formally reinstated.

CONDUCT OF THE APPEAL HEARING

The hearing shall be conducted in English in such a manner as to give the student the full opportunity to explain the reason for their unsatisfactory academic performance. A primary focus of the CAP is determining a student's potential for future academic success.

Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control, which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. Examples of such circumstances include personal illness, serious illness in the immediate family, or the death of an immediate family member.

The CAP grants reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced the student can make a marked improvement in their academic performance. The student has the right to provide written letters (in English) of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.

DIRECT SERVICE EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

All BLVS graduate programs require direct service experiences, consisting of Fieldwork and/or Internship, which must be successfully completed prior to graduation.

Fieldwork and Internship requirements vary by program and are designed to meet applicable accreditation, professional certification, and/or licensure requirements relative to the field of blindness and low vision education and rehabilitation.

All direct service placements must be approved by the respective program. Students may not make placement arrangements independently without prior approval from the Program Director or the designated Fieldwork/Internship Coordinator for their program. All official communication and arrangements for a student placement must originate and be conducted by the designated program faculty. Placement availability near a student's place of residence cannot be

guaranteed. Every effort will be made to identify a high-quality placement that meets program requirements and supports the student's educational and professional development. Students should be aware that travel and/or temporary relocation may be necessary to complete Fieldwork and Internship requirements, depending on the availability of appropriate placement sites. Detailed information regarding placement procedures, required hours, supervision, evaluation, and other direct service requirements is provided in each program's Fieldwork and/or Internship Handbook.

Students must submit all required documentation by the established deadlines, which may vary by program. Depending on the program and placement site, requirements may include:

- Criminal background checks and other required clearances
- Health and immunization documentation
- Required training or certifications
- Site-specific onboarding requirements
- Other documentation or prerequisites required by the program, placement site, accreditation standards, certification bodies, or licensing agencies

All students interacting with minors must follow all requirements set forth by Drexel's Protection of Minors policy. Students may not begin a Fieldwork or Internship placement until they have satisfied all applicable requirements.

All direct service courses must be completed with a grade of B or better. Specific requirements for each program are detailed within the respective handbooks. Students who do not earn the minimum required grade will be required to re-enroll in the course, which may require a new placement.